

CM WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-assisted documentation system for enhancing or replacing the process of dictating and transcribing in the generation of a document, comprising:

p1 means for providing a plurality of document templates including a first document template, wherein each document template comprises text and one or more option-text variables embedded in the text and wherein the one or more option-text variables includes a first option-text variable;

p1 option-text variable replacement means for obtaining a first character string to be used to replace the first option-text variable within the first document template, the option-text variable replacement means comprising:

p2 option-text storage means for storing a plurality of character strings, including the first character string, which can be used to replace the first option-text variable within the first document template, wherein the option-text storage means comprises means for storing an option-text record associated with the first option-text variable in the first document template and wherein the option-text record comprises:

p2 a record identifier; and

p2 a plurality of character strings;

p1 document processing means for processing the first document template, the document processing means comprising:

P2 user interface means for displaying the plurality of character strings which comprise the option-text record associated with the first option-text variable in the first document template;

P2 string selection means for selecting, to replace the first option-text variable, one of the plurality of character strings displayed; and

P2 recording means for recording a pointer indicative of the character string selected; and

P1 document generating means for generating a document from the first document template by replacing the first option-text variable with the selected character string.

2. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 1 wherein the plurality of document templates further includes a second document template and wherein the first and second templates further comprise a shared option-text variable.

3. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 2, wherein the means for storing a record comprises means for differentiating between a record associated with the shared option-text variable in the first document and a record associated with the shared option-text variable in the second document.

4. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 1 wherein:

P1
✓ the option-text variable replacement means further comprises option-text note storage means for storing a user-entered character string which can be used to replace the first option-text variable in the first document template, the option-text note storage means comprising means for storing an option-text note record associated with the first option-text variable, wherein the option-text note record comprises:

P2 an option-text note record identifier associated with the first option-text variable;

P2 a document template identifier associated with the first document template; and

P2 the user-entered character string; and

P1 the string selection means comprises means for indicating that the user-entered character string should be used to replace the first option-text variable in a document generated from the first document template.

5. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 1 wherein:

P1 the option-text variable replacement means further comprises report logging means for storing a date entry representative of the date the document was generated from the first document template, the report logging means comprising means for storing a report log record associated with the first document template,

wherein the report log record comprises the date entry and the document identifier associated with the first document template.

6. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 1 wherein:

P1 the means for providing the first document template comprises means for providing the first document template with a subject matter variable; and

P1 the option-text variable replacement means further comprises subject matter storage means for storing subject matter character strings which can be used to replace subject matter variables in one or more of the plurality of document templates and subject matter associative means for associating subject matter variables with one of a plurality of subject matters, wherein the subject matter storage means comprises means for storing a plurality of subject matter records associated with the plurality of subject matters and wherein each subject matter record comprises:

P2 a subject matter identifier associated with one of the plurality of subject matters; and

P2 a subject matter character string associated with the subject matter variable;

P1 whereby the subject matter character string associated with a particular subject matter can be used to replace the subject matter variable while generating the document from the first document template.

7.. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 6 wherein:

P1 the plurality of subject matters includes a first subject matter; and

P1 the option-text variable replacement means further comprises option-text note storage means for storing a user-entered character string which can be used to replace the first option-text variable in the first document template, the option-text note storage means comprising means for storing an option-text note record associated with the first option-text variable, wherein the option-text note record comprises:

P2 a record identifier associated with the first option-text variable;

P2 a subject matter identifier associated with the first subject matter;

P2 a document template identifier associated with the first document template; and

P2 the user-entered character string.

P1 whereby the user-entered character string can be used to replace the first option-text variable in the document generated, in connection with the first subject matter, from the first document template.

8. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 7 wherein:

P1. the option-text variable replacement means further comprises report logging means for storing a date entry representative of the date the document was generated from the first document template, the report logging means comprising means for storing a report log record associated with the first document template and the first subject matter, wherein the report log record comprises:

P2
P2
P2
the date entry;

the subject matter identifier associated with the first subject matter; and

the document identifier associated with the first document template.

9. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 8 wherein:

P1
the option-text note record further comprises a note date entry;

P1
the selection data record further comprises a selection date entry; and

P1
the note and selection date entries are used to store the date stored in the report log record so that the option-text note record can be associated by date with the document generated from the first document template.

10. A computer-assisted documentation system for enhancing or replacing the process of dictating and transcribing in the generation of a document, comprising:

P1 means for storing a plurality of document templates including a first document template, wherein each document template comprises text and one or more option-text variables, including a first option-text variable, embedded in the text and wherein each document template is identified with a document identifier;

P1 a database comprising:

P2 an option-text file comprising means for storing option-text records associated with each option-text variable, wherein each option-text record comprises:

P2 an option-text record identifier; and

P2 a plurality of character strings;

P1 a selection data file comprising means for storing selection data records associated with the plurality of document templates, wherein each selection data record comprises:

P2 a document identifier;

an option-text record identifier; and

P2 a pointer to one of the plurality of character strings in the option-text record associated with the option-text record identifier;

P1 document processing means for processing the first document template, the document processing means comprising:

P2 user interface means for displaying the plurality of character strings associated with each option-text variable in the first document template;

P2 string selection means for selecting, for each option-text variable, one of the strings displayed; and

P2 recording means for recording a selection data record indicative of the character string selected; and

P1 document generating means for generating a document from the first document template by replacing each option-text variable in the first document template with the selected character string.

11. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 10 wherein:

P1 the database further comprises an option-text note file comprising means for storing an option-text note record associated with the first option-text variable and the first document template, wherein the option-text note record comprises a character string that can be used to replace the first option-text note variable while generating the document from the first document template.

12. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 10 wherein:

P1 the database further comprises a report log file comprising means for storing a report log record associated with the first document template, wherein the report log record comprises a date

representative of the date the document was generated from the first document template.

13. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 10 wherein:

p1 the database further comprises a subject matter file comprising means for storing subject matter records associated with a plurality of subject matters, wherein each subject matter record comprises:

p2 a subject matter identifier; and

p2 a plurality of character strings comprising data descriptive of the particular subject matter; and

p1 each selection data record further comprises a subject matter identifier linking the selection data record to a particular subject matter.

14. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 13 wherein:

p1 the database further comprises an option-text note file comprising means for storing an option-text note record associated with a first option-text variable, a first subject matter and a first document template, wherein the option-text note record comprises a character string that can be used to replace the first option-text note variable in the document generated, in connection with the first subject matter, from the first document template.

15. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 14 wherein:

P1 the database further comprises a report log file comprising means for storing a report log record associated with the first document template and the first subject matter, wherein the report log record comprises a date representative of the date the document was generated, in connection with the first subject matter, from the first document template.

16. The computer-assisted documentation system according to claim 15 wherein:

P1 the option-text note record further comprises a first date entry;

P1 the selection data record further comprises a second date entry; and

P1 the first and second date entries comprise the date stored in the report log record such that the option-text note record can be associated by date with the document generated from the first document template.

17. A computer-based method of generating a document, comprising:

- P1 (a) providing a plurality of document templates, wherein each document template comprises text and one or more option-text variables;

- P1
- (b) providing a plurality of option-text lists, wherein each option-text list is associated with a particular option-text variable and wherein each option-text list comprises a plurality of option-text segments;
- P1
- (c) providing user interface means for selecting an option-text segment, the user interface means comprising:
- display means for displaying each option-text list as a menu of items; and
- selection means for selecting one or more of the items displayed on the display means;
- P1
- (d) selecting a first document template and a first subject matter identifier;
- P1
- (e) displaying, on the display means, a first option-text list associated with a first option-text variable in the first document template;
- P1
- (f) selecting one or more option-text segments from the first option-text list;
- P1
- (g) accessing a selection data file associated with the first document template and the first subject matter identifier;
- P1
- (h) storing, to the selection data file, one or more pointers, wherein each pointer is used to reference a selected option-text segment; and
- P1
- (i) generating a document in which the selected option-text segments are inserted into the first document template.
- 2

18. The method according to claim 17 wherein the step of generating a document comprises:

- (a) retrieving the selection data file;
- (b) retrieving, from within the selection data file, the one or more pointers associated with the first option-text variable;
- (c) retrieving the option-text segment referenced by each pointer; and
- (d) replacing the first option-text variable with the option-text segments retrieved.

19. The method according to claim 17 wherein the step of providing user interface means further includes providing editing means for making user modifications to the text and the option-text segments.

20. The method according to claim 19 wherein the step of providing editing means for making user modifications to the text and the option-text segments includes providing option-text segment entry means for adding user-defined option-text segments to the plurality of option-text segments associated with the first option-text variable.

21. The method according to claim 19 wherein the step of providing editing means for making user modifications to the text

and the option-text segments includes providing option-text note entry means for providing an option-text note.

22. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of providing user interface means comprises:

- P1
- (a) providing printing means for printing a checklist document including indicia of each of the menu items;
and
 - P1 (b) providing a means of indicating a preferred menu item on the checklist document.

23. A method of editing a document template for use in a computer-assisted documentation system comprising one or more document templates in which each of the one or more document templates comprises text and an option-text variable embedded in the text, the method comprising the steps of:

- P1
- a) providing a database for use in accessing and manipulating data in option-text files and selection data files; wherein each option-text file comprises option-text records, including an option-text record identifier and a plurality of character strings associated with the option-text variable, and wherein each selection data file comprises a record associating one of the plurality of character strings in one of the option-text files with the associated option-text variable in a document template;

P1 b) accessing a document template file in order to retrieve a document template;

P1 P1 c) entering text into the document template;
d) inserting a first option-text variable into the text,
the step of inserting the first option-text variable comprising:

P2 i) providing a text area for use in entering strings of characters associated with the first option-text variable;

P2 ii) entering a plurality of character strings into the text area, the plurality of character strings including a first character string;

P2 iii) storing the plurality of character strings to an option-text file associated with the first option-text variable;

P1 e) storing the document template.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the step of inserting a first option-text variable further comprises associating a second option-text variable with the first character string so as to create a branch selection function.

25. A method of selecting two or more character strings to be used to replace a first option-text variable in a document template, the method comprising the steps of:

P1 a) providing a document template comprising text and a first option-text variable embedded in the text;

P1 b) providing a database for accessing and manipulating data in option-text files and selection data files; wherein the database comprises a first selection data file associated with the document template and a first option-text file comprising a first option-text record associated with the first option-text variable and a second option-text record associated with a second option-text variable; wherein each of said option-text records comprises a plurality of character strings;

P1 c) selecting two or more character strings for association with the first option-text variable in the document template; and

P1 d) storing, in the first selection data file, pointers to the two or more character strings selected.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the step of selecting two or more character strings comprises:

P1 displaying the plurality of character strings from the first option-text record;

P1 indicating that two or more character strings are to be combined into a phrase associated with the first option-text variable;

P1 selecting a first character string from the plurality of character strings displayed; and

P1 selecting a second character string from the plurality of character strings displayed.

27. The method of claim 25 wherein:

P1 the plurality of character strings of the first option-text record include a first character string;

P1 the first option-text record further comprises means for associating the second option-text variable with the first character string; and

P1 the step of selecting two or more character strings comprises:

P1 displaying the plurality of character strings from the first option-text record;

P1 selecting the first character string from the plurality of character strings displayed;

P1 displaying the plurality of character strings from the second option-text record; and

P1 selecting a second character string from the plurality of character strings displayed.